

An Empirical Study Of Pros And Cons Of Social Media Usage Byundergraduates Of Federal University Of Technology,

Akure,Nigeria .

BY

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Abstract The main purpose of this paper is to examine and discuss the freedom involved in the use and effects of social media usage among undergraduates in Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria in internet era. To elicit the integral information relevant to the study, data were collected using questionnaire. A total of two hundred copies of questionnaire were distributed randomly to respondents on campus .One hundred and eighty-five were retrieved and found usable for the study, signifying 92.5% response rate. Research questions formed the basis of data analysis. Results were deduced by compiling percentages, frequencies, Means and standard deviation were also used. The study found that many of the respondents (161) 87.02% always used social media while benefits of using social media revealed,were to communicate with friends (=3.67), to meet people (=3.23), to share and tailor information (=3.01), to increase one's accessibility and widening access to information on many issues (=2.71), instant message feature (=2.48) and vehicles to pursue self-pace learning (=2.40) which was the lowest. The study revealed problems encountered as part of cyber frustrations by respondents in the use ofsocial media to include sexual messages and photos (=4.05), cyber-bulling (=3.72), invasion of privacy (=3.51), face to face communications are hindered (=3.50), identity theft (=3.45), and time wasting in using social media (=3.21) received the lowest.

Keywords: *social media, undergraduates, cyber frustrations and internet.*

I. 0INTRODUCTION

The coming on board of internet has affected the society considerably and has revolutionized the ways of communicating among people. The internet offers innumerable services and facilities to people,and has given "birth" to various "offsprings" in which social media have come and stayed as part of services offered by it . Social media has been defined as the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community –based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. It is also viewed as websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro-blogging, social networking,social curation and so on.

Overtime, the concept of communication has evolved. A few decades ago, many people thought interaction between people separated by far distances was a reality only in science fiction movies. The coming of social media and subsequentinventions (Internet and New Media) that had crossed barriers of time, and space changed all that (MC QUAIL0,2012)

A large percentage of Nigerian youths use the internet a lot. The birth of social media has opened a new phase in what a society is and should be. This is also occasioned by the massive production of easily affordable Internet enabled mobile phones which have given Internet access

to young people of lower social status. Mohammed (2013) stated that a large percentage of youths do not use the internet for basic needs such as knowledge acquisition , shopping and sourcing for information but primarily for socialization. These youths spend long hours of the day and night glued to the Internet in their schools, homes or classrooms.

Kaplan and Haelein(2010) defined social media as group of Internet –based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. In line with this statement, social media have become user originated online communication forums focusing on issues that interest users including product, services, friendship or issues in the news. This facilitates conversations between users that may involve rapid word of mouth spread of information online among millions of users which are mostly youths, James K. L. (2010).

II. OLITERATURE REVIEW

Communication is the foundation on which societies are found and maintain.It is interesting to know that society itself is a product of social interaction in which small and large structural-relationships, groups, organizations and institutions are constructed in everyday interaction as stated by Littlejohn and Foss(2008).Communication is not essential for the survival of a man as an individual but it is also necessary for the survival of a meaningful, functional society because basic needs of society such as co habitation,division of labour, socialization,protection of self and more dependon its various forms.The Internet or social media is the world’slargest interconnected environment.It is the most recent and amazing communication invention in the world which enables the users wherever he may be to “transcend borders and have access to encyclopaedias, newspapers ,bulletins boards, videos ,hyper mails, broadcast stations ,and mail order-all at one stop,in a global village”(Krishnamy,2011).According to the National Youth Development Programme and implementation strategy in Nigeria“any person aged between 12-35 years who is passing through mental and physical development process in preparation to face the challenges of adulthood is regarded as youth”It is interesting to know that Youths are the most affected by this societal transformation because the Internet has become part of their socialization process and a prerequisite for a sense of belonging among peers.(Ekiran,2006).Social media have brought a lot of changes in our mode of communication. Communication is the foundation on which societies are found and maintained .It is not surprising that youths in their various institutions of learning rely mostly on this tool to communicate freely with each other irrespective of their distances. Among undergraduates in their institutions, Mohammed (2013) affirmed that social media usage has brought about new kinship ties being created and maintained. It is interesting to note that, the invention of social media was to bring people together to promote literacy, inform and societal morality among users. It is saddening to observe that, this important tool has caused damages to moral standard of youths going by their involvement in the use of social media. The extent of youth reliance on social media for various reasons like creation and maintenance of relationships among themselves is high. A survey has shown that, one out of every five relationships in the west now starts online.

The use of social media should be seen as a tool for effective change in their learning and developmental process. According to Ogunsola (2004) , the use of social media as a result of internet evolution has revolutionized access to information and with its technology continues to have a profound effect in promoting both social and academic development of undergraduates in their institutions thus, creating for them the land of limitless possibilities and opportunities . This

statement further buttress the point that use of social media has made acquisition of knowledge not to pose any form of difficulty because it offers unique and exciting opportunities to explore the world.

2.1 Statement of the problem

Any visit to most Institutions in Nigeria would agree to the statement that, out of ten undergraduates would hold internet connected cell phones. The availability of this internet connected mobile phones has made interaction and communications between them to be more in touch than before irrespective of distance. The paramount and practical reasons why these undergraduates use social media and the draw backs being experienced in using social media form the crux of this paper which are the questions researchers had in mind before embarking on this study.

2.2 Research Question

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. How often do undergraduates use social media [frequency of usage]
2. Why do undergraduates use social media [reasons for using social media?]
3. What problems do they encounter in using social media? [Problemsfaced]

3.0 Methodology

From the population of undergraduates, 200 undergraduates were sampled randomly. To elicit the integral information pertaining to the study, data was collected using the tool of questionnaire . A total of self-administered copies of the questionnaire were shared randomly among the sampled undergraduates . One hundred and eighty five copies of the distributed questionnaire were retrieved and useful for the study, signifying 92.5% response.

The quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the survey were analyzed using percentages, frequencies and means where applicable. The quantitative item in the questionnaire for the study is frequency of usage of social media by the undergraduates. For qualitative analysis, A four – point Likert-type scale was used to determine mean scores of respondents perception of issues raised. The values given to the different scaling statements were as follows:

SA – Strongly Agree	4
A – Agree	3
D – Disagree	2
SD – Strongly Disagree	1

On a 4-point Likert type scale the cut- off point was obtained by adding the assigned values scale (1+2+3+4 =10) and dividing by 4 to obtain a mean of 2.50 (10/4) . In this case, any value item ranked 2.50 and above was regarded as positive while any one below 2.50 was regarded as negative . The scores given to any item were computed by adding the values of the ratings by the respondents. The means were computed from the sum of the value points and divided by the number of the responses. The formula that was used in calculating the means was $X = \frac{\sum X}{n}$. In this case,

X= mean

x = value

n = number of responses

$\sum x$ = sum of responses

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the frequency of use of social media by the respondents, they were asked to indicate the frequency of use of social media. Table 1 provides a picture of the respondents' frequency of use of social media.

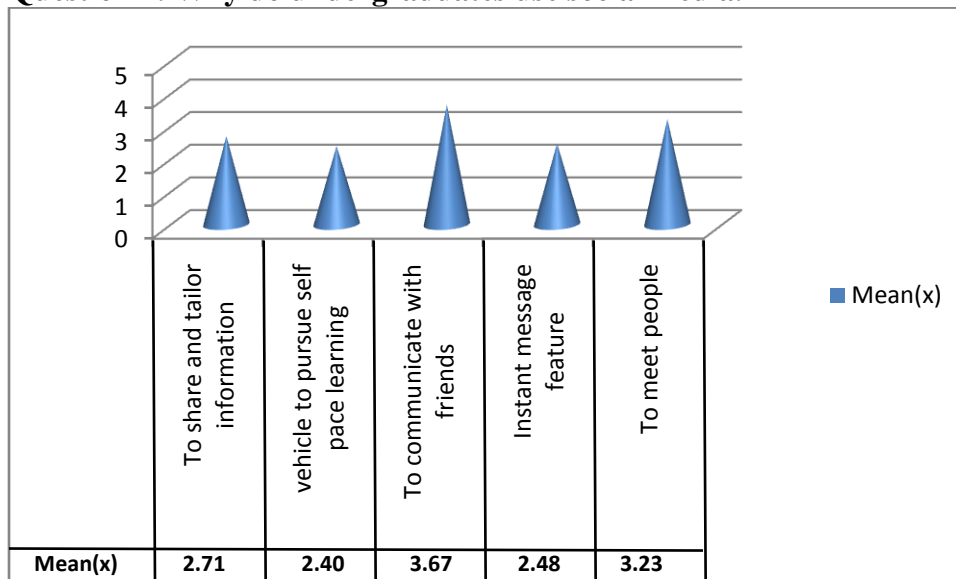
.Table 1: Respondents' frequency of use of social media.

Frequency	Respondents	Percentage
Always	161	87.02
Often	14	7.57
Rarely	08	4.33
Never	02	1.08
Total	185	100.00

Source: Survey 2015

The frequency of use of social media by the sampled respondents as presented above show that , 161 (87.02%) always use social media while 18(7.57%) of the respondents often use social media . The trend follows that 08 (4.33%) and 02(1.08%) of the respondents rarely and never used social media respectively.

Research Question 2: Why do undergraduates use social media.

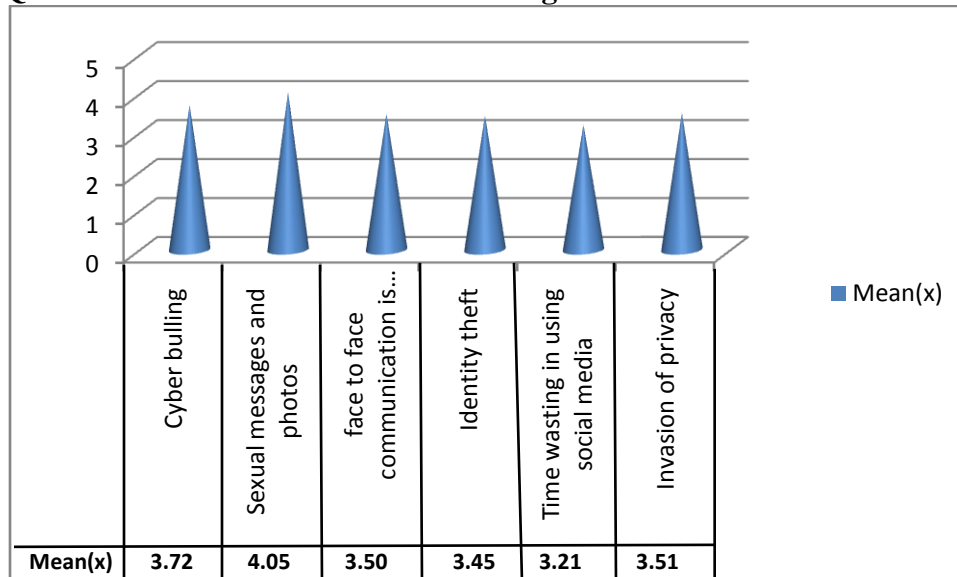


Draw from the chart above, the result presented indicates that three ratings are above the criterion mean of 2.50. Responses on "to communicate with friends" were rated 3.67, indicating that most of the respondents use social media for communication purpose. Another good reason why they use social media is to "to meet people" with mean of 3.23. The study also revealed that use of

social media by the respondents also centered on how to share and tailor information, and they do enjoy instant message feature from use of social media. The means are represented by 2.71 and 2.48 respectively.

The least of the reasons why undergraduates use social mediato use it as vehicle to pursue self-pace learning with mean of 2.40.

Research Question 3: Problems encounter in using social media.



The above chart shows there are drawbacks in using social media by the sampled undergraduates. These problems encountered in order of ranking were: "sexual messages and photos (4.05) " "cyber-bullying (3.72) " "invasion of privacy (3.51) " "face to face communication is hindered (3.50) " "Identify theft (3.45) " "and "time wasting in using social media (3.21)".

III. CONCLUSION

The major findings of this study were:

1. Majority of undergraduates in the university use social media.
2. The major benefits of using social media by them are: to communicate with friends and to meet people who are using social media.
3. The problems encountered by sampled undergraduates in using social media are : indiscriminate posting of sexual messages and photos, cyber-bullying, invasion of privacy, face to face communication is hindered , identity theft and time wasting in using social media.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. Undergraduates are urged to block any contact that used to send disdainful messages or pictures.
2. There should be a way of not receiving from unwanted contacts.
3. Efforts should be made where possible to involve bloggers to be awareof illicit messages and photos.
4. The use of social media should be directed towards all round development of youths.

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